

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Barbara Fisher on 3/8/2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 10 has been cancelled

In line 10 of claim 1, "the substrate" has been replaced with –the substrate–

In line 1 of claim 20, "an integrated circuit manufactured using the method" has been replaced with –A method of manufacturing an integrated circuit—

In line 1 of claim 21, "The integrated circuit as recited in claim 20" has been replaced with –The method as recited in claim 20—

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1-8, 11-21, 26 allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Regarding claims 1, 11, 20, the applicants have presented persuasive arguments, see pages 9-10 of the response filed on 12/18/2007, that the cited prior art of Chien and Kim fails to disclose or suggest a method for etching a substrate comprises a step of etching an opening in said substrate dielectric layer using an etchant comprising a carbon oxide, a

fluorocarbon, an etch rate modulator, and an inert carrier gas, wherein a flow rate of said carbon oxide is greater than about 80 sccm and said etchant is selective to said aluminum oxide etch stop layer and without overetching said etch stop layer into said microelectronic device and without introducing hydrogen into the method for etching the substrate/ etching an opening in said substrate dielectric layer using an etchant comprising a carbon oxide, a fluorocarbon, an etch rate modulator, and an inert carrier gas, wherein a flow rate of said carbon oxide is greater than about 80 sccm and said etchant is selective to said aluminum oxide etch stop layer since Chein et al. specifically require silicon nitride and other close silicon compounds as a stop layer for oxide etch applications and Kim discloses that aluminum oxide is as an "auxiliary" etch stop layer and in addition to the tantalum etch stop layer. Thus, the rejection(s) of claims 1, 3-4, 5 and 8, 11-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chien et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0142610) in view of Kim et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,500,763) have been withdrawn

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

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3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LAN VINH whose telephone number is (571)272-1471. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nadine Norton can be reached on 571 272 1465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Lan Vinh/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1792